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goddamn condo. And by apartment I of course mean medium-size closet w/ an air shaft for window. His girlfriend's closet on 10th St. & Avenue A with a caved-in ceiling, mouse-sized roaches and the floor on a 30-degree tilt is $750/mo. Many units in this "gentrified" building contain fully formed yuppies who when kids downstairs offer to sell 'em "crack . . . smoke . . . etc." decline *politely*.

The people I know who still live in New York live there 'cause if they ever abandoned their apartment they'd never, not even hypothetically, be able to replace it. To move is to move forever. It happened to me (fall '75), it'll happen to them. Meanwhile, re those who *can* move, there was this item in the Saturday *N.Y. Times* on the movement of rich bastards from Fifth Ave. to Central Park West. Condos on Fifth run, oh, five million while on C.P.W. they're a measly three. Plus — the rich *always* have these pluses — "there are so many interesting shops and cafes on the West Side" (said one such flying piece of shit).

Shit . . . piss . . . I asked a cop in Union Square where I could take a piss, and he *courteously* directed me to a Wendy's where they don't lock the john. Ask an L.A. cop about urine and he'll bop you on the head. But I figure it's probably just the guy didn't want me pissing in the street. 'Cause the streets, well, when I still lived there the subways were already pretty much an extension of the sewer. Lots of fluids and stink and most likely the sewers even leak. Now, today, the sewer level's reached at least the street, first floor, and possibly even the second. When it reaches sky level, will the clouds rain piss?

Today's rats. I met this N.Y. Parks Department guy who told me Central Park rats have evolved into something so tough and ornery they'll attack — and eat — full-grown *cats*. Says he's seen it. Seemed like a credible guy.

Great Moments in Irrational AIDS Fear. Buy a paper at *any newsstand* in Manhattan, try and give 'em the exact change, aim specifically for their hand, and they will not take it. Or maybe that's Fear of Cooties. I actually, by the way, saw five or six "AIDS beggars" — emaciated, scabby guys moaning, "I've got AIDS . . . feed me." (That must go over big.)

And what else? Well, the heartlessness. New York is basically no longer a city that "cares." Bernie Goetz (as hero) should have been the tipoff. L.A. *never* had a heart so in that regard they're even.

And? Well they got this sex station on cable, actually just a tit station altho you do sometimes see pudenda. Jugs the size of watermelons with phone numbers supered across the screen. If I was 13 I'm sure I could dig it.

Newsheets? It's even worse than here. If you're not a stockbroker (i.e., if you don't read the *Times*) you've got a choice between Rupert Murdoch's *Post* ("Slut Killed in Drug Deal Mixup") and a *Newsday* that *once* had naught but headlines — and now not even that.

Food? The food's still OK. If you don't mind spending $14 for a (damn good) pastrami sandwich.

Subways? Horrible but not quite a horror. No worse than the street. But I didn't use 'em much. Mostly I just walked and grumbled.

So, anyway, I was there and now I'm here, I get back and it's 100 degrees F. Two loathsome places — like a shuttle ride between Times Square and 42nd & Lex, horrible regardless of destination. I can't figure out how these bicoastal scumbags do it. ■

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